



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park of
American Samoa

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National Park of American Samoa News Release

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Vatia Fire Smolders Due to Hot and Dry Conditions

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—Late in the day on September 22, Vatia's pulenu'u informed the National Park of American Samoa that a fire was burning in the village's former dumpsite within the national park. A village work crew was burning leaves when it jumped into the dumpsite. Initially adjacent vegetation burned, but now only the trash is burning. According to the pulenu'u the fire has been burning for one week, but the national park never received notification.

Last night, the local fire department dumped 200 gallons of water on the fire and will provide additional water as needed. National park personnel will provide 24-hour monitoring during the next several days.

The national park was informed that local firefighters responded earlier in the week and doused the fire with water. Since then, the fire has been smoldering through several feet of garbage from decades of use. The Vatia dumpsite ceased operations after the national park began co-managing the land with the village.

National park crews are trained and equipped for wildland fires, but trash fires require specialized training including hazardous materials. The steep terrain in the area also makes it unsafe for firefighters to work in.

"We hope that our normal wet weather conditions will return to help extinguish this fire," said Superintendent Mike Reynolds.

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Very little rain, high temperatures, and low humidity have increased the likelihood of more fires throughout the islands. The national park encourages all residents to use extreme caution or refrain from burning debris until rainy conditions return to prevent the loss of homes or lives.

Superintendent Mike Reynolds also said that, “Despite living in a typically rainy environment, the prevailing dry conditions means that we must adapt appropriately by reducing fire use.”

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The National Park of American Samoa was established in 1988 to preserve the coral reefs, tropical rainforest, archeological and cultural resources, the habitat of fruit bats, and to provide educational opportunities for visitors and residents. National park lands and waters are leased from villages and the American Samoa Government through a long-term agreement with the National Park Service.

For more information about visiting the National Park of American Samoa, call 699-3982, email NPSA_Info@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/npsa. Also, visit the national park’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

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